

Zerby, Johnson Lee, Lilligren

Declaring that the City of Minneapolis support an increase in the tax on cigarettes by \$1.00 per package.

Whereas, tobacco use is by far the leading cause of preventable illness and death in the United States, associated with about 20% of all U.S. deaths and exceeding the total number of deaths from alcohol, drugs, firearms, motor vehicle crashes, and HIV/AIDS combined (McGinnis & Foege, 1993). Approximately 6,400 Minnesota deaths were related to cigarette smoking in 1995; this toll would be even greater if deaths related to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS or secondhand smoke) and smokeless tobacco products were included (MDH, 1996); and

Whereas, substantial evidence shows that increasing the price of tobacco serves as an effective means of reducing tobacco use, especially in adolescents, as well as providing additional funding for prevention programs (CDC, 2000). Nonetheless, current average cigarette excise taxes in the U.S. lag far behind the levels implemented in other industrialized nations, and federal and average state excise taxes on cigarettes have failed to keep pace with the retail price of tobacco. Federal and state excise taxes as a percentage of the retail price of cigarettes in Minnesota began a downward trend in the 1970s and stood at only 23.7% in 1999, compared to 57.5% in 1971 (Orzechowski & Walker, 1999); and

Whereas, Minnesota now ranks 20th in the nation for its cigarette excise tax rate (48 cents per pack). The Governor has proposed raising the tax 29 cents per pack, increasing it to Wisconsin's rate of 77 cents per pack. The Minnesota Smoke Free Coalition (SFC) is proposing a \$1.00 per pack increase; and

Whereas, in an opinion survey conducted by the SFC 62% of Minneapolis voters approved increasing the state tax on cigarettes by \$1.00 per pack; and

Whereas, 19% of Minneapolis 9th graders smoke (2001 Minnesota Student Survey data). Statewide, 39% of high school students and 13% of middle school students use tobacco (MN Dept. of Health, MN Youth Tobacco Survey, 2000). 90% of smokers begin as teens (USHHS, Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People: A report of the Surgeon General, 1994). Nationally, an estimated 17-20% of pregnant women smoke (1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse; 1998, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services); and

Whereas, a 10% increase in the price of a pack of cigarettes can be expected to reduce overall teen smoking by 13% (ImpacTEEN, University of Illinois at Chicago, 2001). Tax increases work to significantly reduce smoking among pregnant women. A recent study found that "pregnant women are more likely than the general populations to quite smoking as cigarette taxes increase." And that "for every 10% increase in the price of cigarettes, smoking by pregnant women fell by 7% (The Nation's Health, Dec. 2001/Jan. 2002);" and

Whereas, the Department of Health and Family Support (DHFS) works to reduce teen smoking rates on several fronts due to the immense impact smoking has on overall morbidity and mortality of Minneapolis citizens, and the fact that most people who smoke start when they are teens for some departmental activities include:

- A Minneapolis Tobacco Prevention Specialists who works in the community and in conjunction with a school-based liaison and youth coordinators to reduce teen smoking, including education about second-hand smoke and support for youth advocacy work. This work is done in collaboration with three other quadrants of Hennepin County.
- State grant funding to DHFS is passed through to Licensing to support that department in coordinating their youth tobacco retailer compliance check program.
- Teen tobacco cessation classes are offered through several school-based clinic sites.
- State Youth Risk Behavior grant funding that comes to the department was given to the Minneapolis Public Schools to implement a Life Skills curriculum that supports healthy decision making among youth, especially related to alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Increasing the tobacco tax would supplement and support these efforts, and add to a comprehensive strategy to health improvement through smoking reduction in the city and the state;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by The City Council of The City of Minneapolis:

That the City Council supports increasing the Minnesota excise tax on cigarettes by \$1.00 per pack in order to reduce overall teen smoking in the state, and to provide between \$300 and \$350 million in new excise and sales tax revenues to Minnesota each year.